DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 343 EA 012 800

AUTHOR Warner, Allan K.
TITLE A Guide to School District Reorganization.
INSTITUTION Nebraska State Dept. of Education, Lincoln.
PUB DATE Jan 79
NOTE 24p.; Appendices may not reproduce clearly.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees; Community Surveys; Guides; *Planning; Records (Forms); *School District Reorganization; *State Legislation
IDENTIFIERS *Nebraska

ABSTRACT

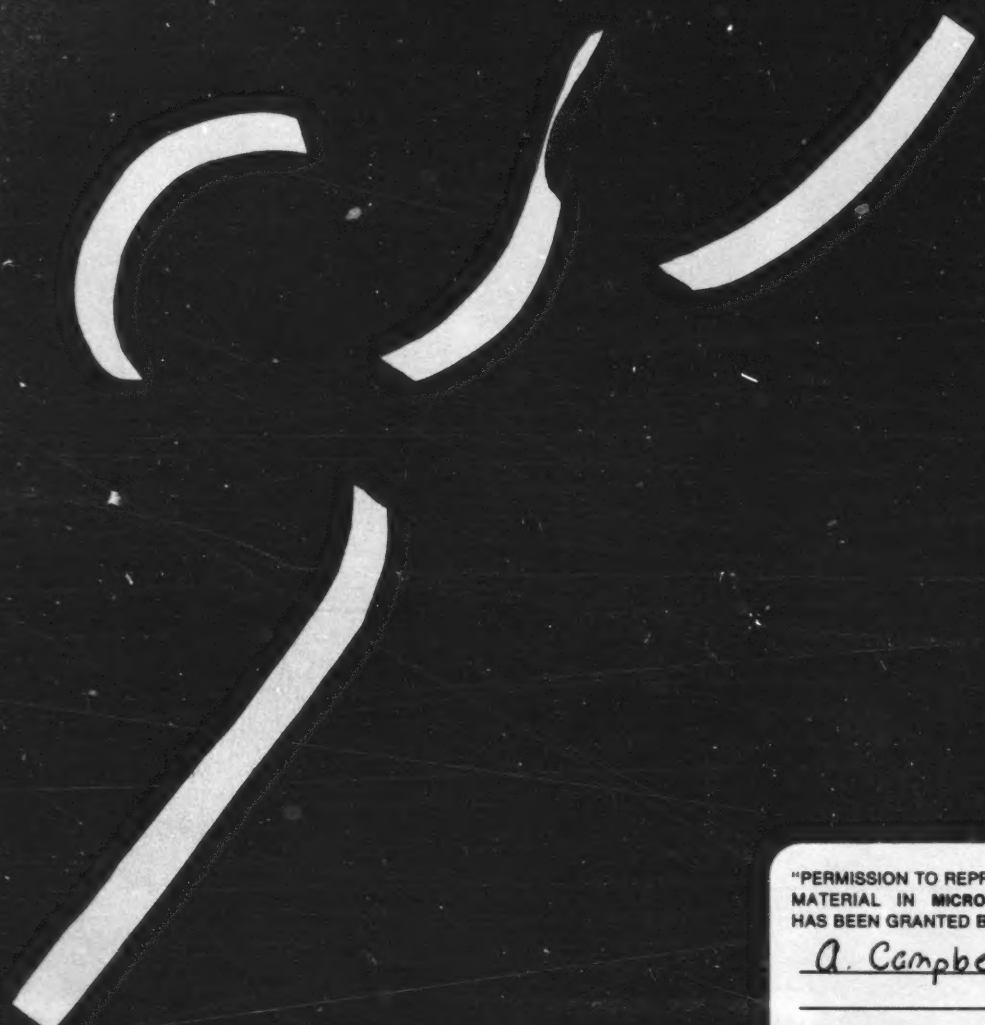
School district reorganization is a process that requires considerable planning. This guide provides information on school district reorganization in the state of Nebraska, to interested boards of education and county and citizen reorganization committees. Topics discussed include planning for reorganization, establishing citizen committees, using school and community surveys, and analyzing state statutes. The appendix reproduces suggested forms for collecting statistical information, as well as suggested public notices and ballots. (Author/LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

REORGANIZATION



ED188343

EA 012 800

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A. Campbell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Frank E. Landis	Lincoln
(District 1)	
James Monahan	Omaha
(District 2)	
Walter M. Thompson	Oakland
(District 3)	
Don H. Lienemann	Papillion
(District 4)	
Dorothy Creigh	Hastings
(District 5)	
Margaret Lockwood	Gering
(District 6)	
Arlene Hart	Sargent
(District 7)	
William Ramsey	Omaha
(District 8)	

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

Prepared by
Allan K. Warner

Issued by
Harold Deselms
Director of Field Services

Nebraska State Department of Education

Anne Campbell
Commissioner of Education

301 Centennial Mall South
(6th floor)
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
Telephone: (402) 471-2465

January, 1979

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Laying The Groundwork 1

Legal and Technical Advisors 2

Citizen Committees 2-5

- Community and School Population Subcommittee
- Curricular and Extra-Curricular Subcommittee
- Buildings and Facilities Subcommittee
- Student Transportation Subcommittee
- Budget and Finance Subcommittee
- Petition or Election Subcommittee

School and Community Surveys 5

State Statutes for Reorganization 6-11

- Petition Method
- Election Method

Appendix A 12-16

- Suggested Format For Collecting Statistical Information

Appendix B 17-19

- Suggested Public Notices and Ballots

Introduction

School district reorganization is a process which can require considerable prior planning to effectuate a plan which will not only provide better educational experiences for Nebraska youth but which will also meet the approval of the patrons of the school districts involved. Many school district reorganization plans in the past have resulted in neighbors refusing to speak to one another or property owners actually moving so as not to be included as a part of the newly reorganized district. The purpose of this brochure is to help provide information on school district reorganization to boards of education, county reorganization committees and citizen reorganization committees. It is hoped that the discussion of state statutes, the guide for establishing citizen committees, and examples included in this brochure will assist communities who are planning school district reorganization projects to avoid the pitfalls which some communities have experienced in the past.

Laying The Groundwork

Successful school district reorganization does not occur by happenstance. One of the first requirements for a reorganization plan to be successful is for the school officials responsible for developing the reorganization plan to familiarize themselves with past research which relates to the positive and negative aspects of school district reorganization. This will require some time spent researching and reading current periodicals found in most college or university libraries. Visitations should be made with college instructors teaching in the area of educational administration and with educational consultants in the Nebraska Department of Education to gain information on past and present school district reorganization in Nebraska.

It is very important for school officials planning school district reorganization to develop well-defined reasons for wanting to become involved in reorganization. The two primary reasons for school district reorganization may be either: (1) to provide better educational opportunities for the youth in the school district, or (2) to reduce the financial inequities which may exist among the school districts. There are usually other more specific reasons which should be identified so that these can be made public and discussed at public meetings. Some of these reasons may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Population decline
2. A desire for a broader educational curriculum
3. Suburban sprawl
4. Increased nonresident tuition fees
5. Freeholding out of Class I and Class II school districts
6. A desire to get more education for each tax dollar spent

After the foregoing groundwork has been laid it would be desirable to call in consultants from the Field Services Section of the Nebraska State Department of Education to meet with school officials and the boards of education which are interested in developing a reorganization plan. These consultants will discuss the following areas which should be of interest before working with the public on the reorganization plan:

1. The importance of the use of legal and technical advisors
2. The establishment of a citizens' committee
3. The value of a school and community survey
4. State statutes which outline various procedures of reorganization

Legal and Technical Advisors

School districts developing a reorganization plan should acquire the services of a legal advisor in the early stages of the project. This cannot be stressed too strongly. The larger and more comprehensive the reorganization proposal, the greater the chances opposition may develop. One of the first things the opposition may do is to employ consultants who attempt to find technical errors made by not following the step-by-step procedures as outlined by the statutes.

Until recently it may have been difficult to secure legal services from an attorney who might be well-versed in school law, and more specifically in the school district reorganization statutes. This may still be the case in certain areas of Nebraska. This is not meant in any way to be derogatory, but it is a fact that many school districts in the past have not found it necessary to retain legal counsel. Therefore, many attorneys have not found it necessary to familiarize themselves with the complexities of the school reorganization statutes. If a school district attempting to develop a reorganization plan feels it necessary to use the school attorney, or an attorney that resides in the area, it would be advisable to encourage the individual to consult with the Nebraska State Department of Education or legal counsel who have experience in the interpretation of the school district reorganization statutes.

For major school district reorganization plans, it is equally as important to retain the services of a person, or persons, to serve as a technical advisor to the schools contemplating reorganization. The Nebraska State Department of Education, Field Services Section would be available to serve in an advisory role in this phase of reorganization. Assistance could be provided in the collection and compilation of data which will be needed for public meetings as well as to assist in the presentation of this information at these meetings. Due to their frequent contact with school district reorganization problems which occur throughout the State of Nebraska, the technical advisors from the Nebraska Department of Education would be capable of answering reorganization questions which may arise at public meetings which local school officials or members of boards of education may not be familiar. There would be no cost to school districts or county reorganization committees utilizing the services of consultants from the Nebraska State Department of Education. The University of Nebraska and the Nebraska State Colleges may also be available to serve in an advisory capacity in the development of reorganization plans.

Citizen Committees

The decision to establish citizen committees and the appointment of people to serve on these committees can be crucial to the success or failure of a reorganization plan. One of the purposes for the establishment of citizen committees is to provide the patrons the opportunity to experience personal involvement in a project. From a psychological standpoint, if people are serving on a committee, they feel a sense of responsibility to support the plan both at public meetings and in day-to-day contacts with their friends and neighbors. As members of citizen committees report their findings to the public at public meetings, it can readily result in providing the people attending the meetings with the impression that the reorganization plan is a community effort and not just a plan being "pushed" by the board of education or by school officials. When the citizen committees have been formed by one or more boards of education, it should be stressed that the ultimate responsibility for making decisions lies with the board of education. The steering committee and any subcommittee should serve at the convenience of the board of education. Any recommendations arising from the action of these committees must be advisory only and the boards of education should retain the right to accept or reject any of their recommendations.

The number of committees as well as the number of people serving on each committee will be determined by the scope of the reorganization plan. As has been previously stated, one of the purposes of citizen committees is to involve people. However, school districts planning reorganization should be cautioned not to have too many committees, or to have so many people on the committees that these committees become cumbersome and unmanageable.

The first committee which should be considered would be the steering committee. It would be advisable to establish this committee after the boards of education and school officials have met with consultants from the Nebraska State Department of Education concerning the statutes relating to school district reorganization and have at least made a tentative decision as to which statute to use.

The steering committee might be composed of a minimum of six members or as many as twelve or more, depending upon the scope of the reorganization plan. When larger steering committees are planned, consideration might be given to making some of the members *ex-officio* members. Each working member of the steering committee should be a chairperson of one of the subcommittees.

In a small reorganization plan involving two or three school districts it may be desirable to have members of the existing boards of education to serve on the steering committee. Care should be taken to make certain that there is representation from all the boards of education of the schools represented in the reorganization plan. In larger reorganization plans it might be more desirable to use lay persons on the steering committee. If this is done, each board of education should appoint one of their board members to serve as an *ex-officio* member on the steering committee. These *ex-officio* members could then report back to their respective boards of education on work being done by the steering committee.

People selected to serve on the steering committee should have the characteristics of "superman", that is, "able to jump over tall buildings in a single leap." They should be even-tempered, mild-mannered and capable of chairing public hearings where all those in attendance may not be totally supportive of the reorganization plan. Their responsibilities will include the following:

1. Select members for their respective subcommittees
2. Arrange for and conduct meetings
3. Orient the subcommittee as to their tasks
4. Prepare, or see that reports are prepared on time
5. Receive oral and written reports and present reports to boards of education and to the public
6. Secure resource people to work with the subcommittee, to report to the boards of education, or to the public

Although different communities may have the need for different committees, six subcommittees might be considered: (1) Community and School Population Subcommittee; (2) Curricular and Extra-curricular Subcommittee; (3) Buildings and Facilities Subcommittee; (4) Student Transportation Subcommittee; (5) Budget and Finance Subcommittee; (6) Petition or Election Subcommittee. Some of the responsibilities of each of these subcommittees are listed below.

Community and School Popuiation Subcommittee

1. Review past school enrollments and project future trends
2. Identify present and proposed school district boundaries
3. Review past birth rates
4. Identify areas of population growth and decline
5. Identify residence of each student and tentatively identify attendance center boundaries
6. Review private school enrollment trends if necessary
7. Identify existing community services that might affect the educational program

Curricular and Extra-Curricular Subcommittee

1. Evaluate existing program by school or district
2. Suggest a curricular and extra-curricular program for the proposed district, citing those areas of increased offerings
3. Recommend an internal organizational structure
4. Recommend staff and equipment requirements of the proposed district
5. Review existing services being offered and suggest educational services which may be provided by the proposed district
6. Visit exemplary programs in schools which would be of similar size as the proposed district

Buildings and Facilities Subcommittee

1. Review existing buildings and facilities for adequacy of use to house present student population and programs
2. Determine how existing buildings and facilities might be used under the proposed reorganization plan
3. Visit exemplary buildings in other districts of similar size as the proposed district
4. Determine what new buildings and facilities might be needed in the immediate future and the long-range future
5. Estimate costs of remodeling or renovating existing facilities as well as costs of any new facilities

Student Transportation Subcommittee

1. Review existing transportation equipment and routes
2. Using the map developed by the Community and School Population Subcommittee, develop proposed bus routes and determine if existing equipment can be used or if new or additional equipment might be needed

Budget and Finance Subcommittee

1. Review past and present assessed valuation of each school district in the proposed plan
2. Review past and present costs of operating each school distict in the proposed plan
   a. Per pupil costs
   b. Bonded indebtedness
   c. Assessed valuation per student
3. Compare the total cost of operation of existing schools with the cost of operating schools of similar size
4. Develop a proposed budget for the coming school year

Petition or Election Subcommittee

1. Conduct surveys to attempt to ascertain community attitudes toward school district reorganization. Such surveys should be conducted during the early phases of a reorganization plan so that information collected might be used by other committees
2. Be responsible for assisting in the circulation of petitions, should this be the avenue of reorganization selected
3. Assist in getting people to attend public hearings
4. Assist in contacting people for "coffee klatsches", neighborhood meetings, or finding other ways of getting the word to the people

The Petition or Election Subcommittee should be further subdivided into ward canvassers. These ward canvassers will be responsible for door-to-door contacts. It should be the responsibility of the other subcommittees to provide these ward canvassers with sufficient material so that they might better explain the reorganization plan to the populace of the school districts.

The size of the subcommittee will vary depending upon the scope of the reorganization plan and the size of the school districts in the plan. It is recommended that there be a minimum of two or three representatives on each subcommittee from each class of school district represented in the reorganization proposal. It would be desirable to get as many supporters of the reorganization plan as possible to serve on these subcommittees. However, there have been instances where communities have been able to identify influential people in a community who may not support a reorganization plan and, by placing them on a working committee they have been able to show them that the plan is beneficial and would ultimately provide a better educational program for the youth.

The time of the year that the reorganization plan calls for collecting signatures on the petitions or voting on a reorganization proposal can be important. It is difficult to get people interested in such matters as school district reorganization at times of the year when they might be busy with personal or business activities. Late spring, summer and fall are usually poor times to attempt to stimulate interest in school district reorganization.

There are a number of statutes which provide some time limitations which also may affect the time which a reorganization plan should be completed. The statutes relating to school district reorganization, which will be more thoroughly discussed later in this bulletin, specifically state that during certain phases the plan can be held no longer than thirty days before action is taken, or it must be held ten days before action can be taken. Therefore, it may take as long as four months to process a reorganization plan after the plan has been turned over to the county reorganization committee.

Some reorganization plans may result in a reduction in faculty. As school districts consolidate, the new school district may find itself with two or more superintendents, secondary principals, or too many classroom teachers endorsed to teach in a specific area. There are a number of statutes which relate to teacher and/or administrator employment. Nebraska Statute 79-1254 specifically relates to a time limitation for notifying certificated personnel that there will be a reduction in force or a change in assignment and that their contract may not be renewed or may be altered. This statute states, in part:

> "...The secretary of the board shall, no later than April 15, notify each administrator or teacher in writing of any conditions of unsatisfactory performance or other conditions because of a reduction in staff members or change of leave of absence policies of the board of education which the board members consider may be just cause to either terminate or amend the contract for the ensuing school year . . . ."

The failure to comply with the foregoing section of Nebraska Statute 79-1254 could result in forcing a recently reorganized school district to retain unnecssary personnel. This would either increase expenditures or result in the assignment of certificated personnel to teaching areas in which they have not been properly trained or endorsed.

School and Community Surveys

As has been previously indicated, school districts planning a reorganization project should collect information relating to past, present and future population and financial trends as well as conditions and use of existing buildings. Board members or patrons serving on the various committees normally have neither the time nor the expertise to conduct such in-depth studies. Although the administrators of the schools included in the reorganization plan may have the ability to conduct such surveys, they usually will be so involved with the normal day-to-day activities of the schools that they will not have time to conduct the survey.

If school districts choose to use the services of a consultant, one of the conditions for employment should be to conduct the surveys needed for the reorganization plan. The cost for conducting these surveys should be a part of a private consultant's total fee. It would be well for the school districts to review some of the surveys which the consultant has conducted for other school districts to determine the completeness of the surveys.

The Nebraska State Department of Education, in conjunction with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, can conduct these surveys. Although there would be no cost for the services provided by the Nebraska State Department of Education consultants, the University of Nebraska does charge a small fee sufficient to cover the expenses incurred by their personnel as well as the cost of printing twenty-five to thirty copies of the report.

Although any consultant or consulting firm will undoubtedly have a list of items which is normally included in a school or community survey, the following is a list of topics and/or items which boards of education might wish to have included in a study. Some examples of tables and charts of similar studies are presented in Appendix A.

1. County population from 1900 to date
2. Births by mother's residence for the county
3. Nonresident attendance pattern and map
4. Selected data for the past ten years for all the schools involved in the study
5. Selected data on Class I school districts served
6. Pre-school census and enrollment for the past ten years
7. Private school enrollment pattern
8. Five- or ten-year projected enrollment
9. Approximate available space in existing buildings

10. Suggested short-term and long-term space requirements
11. Local and regional maps showing present and proposed school district boundaries
12. Floor plans of existing buildings
13. County or area land use map
14. A comparison in the cost of operation of the proposed reorganized district with existing schools districts of similar size

State Statutes for Reorganization

School district reorganization results in either a change of boundaries or the formation of a new school district. Usually small reorganization plans will take the approach of boundary changes. In such a procedure, the receiving district will retain its current name and school district number. The scope of a reorganization plan whereby the receiving district retains its current name and number may be as limited as an individual property owner desiring to change his property from one school district to another, or as large as those districts involved in a proposal may desire. Reorganization proposals resulting in the formation of a new school district frequently involves the dissolving of two or more school districts of various classes and sizes. Examples of such proposals have been in the formation of the Centennial School District #67R in Seward County and the Sandy Creek School District #1C in Clay County.

There are a number of Nebraska Statutes which relate to the closing of school districts. However, there are only two Nebraska Statutes at the present time which relate to the changing of school district boundaries or the formation of new school districts which must be processed through the county and State Reorganization Committee. These are Nebraska Statutes 79-402 and 79-426. These are frequently referred to as the "petition" method and the "election" method respectively.

Petition Method (79-402)

Step #1: The county reorganization committee receives petitions signed by sixty or sixty-five percent of the legal voters of each district affected.
1. In addition to the petitions of legal voters, petitions may be initiated and accepted by:
   a. The board of education of any Class III, IV, V and VI district, and
   b. The board of education of any Class I or II district in which is located a city or incorporated village.
2. When a Class I or a Class II school district in which there is no city or village, petitions to merge in whole or in part with a Class I or Class II district, such merger may be accepted by petition of the board of education of the accepting district.

Step #2: Within forty days after the county reorganization committee has received the petition, it shall be reviewed and approved or disapproved and forwarded to the State Reorganization Committee. The petition must contain the following information:
1. A description of the proposed boundaries of the reorganized districts
2. A summary of the terms for reorganization
   a. Provision for the initial board to be appointed by wards or at large
3. A map showing proposed boundaries
4. Such other matters as use of existing buildings

Step #3: Within forty days after the State Committee has received the petition, it shall be reviewed and approved or disapproved and referred to the county reorganization committee.
1. The State Reorganization Committee can make recommendations to the county reorganization committee relating to the proposal.

Step #4: Within fifteen days the county reorganization committee must consider the action of the State Reorganization Committee and determine whether to give final approval or disapproval to the proposal.
1. The county reorganization committee must advertise and hold a public hearing and announce the action taken by the State and county reorganization committees.

Step #5: The petition must be held by the county reorganization committee for a period of ten days.

1. Petitioners' names may be added or removed from the petition during this ten-day period. Additions or withdrawals of signatures shall be by notorized affidavit filed with the county superintendent.

Step #6: Within fifteen days the county superintendent shall advertise and hold a hearing to determine the validity and sufficiency of the petition.

Step #7: If it is found that there are a sufficient number of valid signatures on the petition, the county superintendent will proceed to carry out the changes as outlined in the petition.

1. Any person adversely affected by the changes made by the county superintendent may appeal to the district court in the county in which the real estate is located.

Step #8: If a new district is created, the county reorganization committee shall, within thirty days, appoint from the qualified electors of the new district, a board of education.

1. If the new district involves territory lying in two or more counties, the board of education shall be appointed by the joint action of the county reorganization committees of the counties involved.

Election Method (79-426)

Step #1: A plan for the reorganization of school districts is either prepared by the county reorganization committee, or committees if more than one county is involved, or a reorganization plan can be submitted to the county committee or committees by the school districts involved in the reorganization proposal. If the latter procedure is used, the plan should be reviewed and must be accepted or rejected by the county committee or committees. In preparing a plan or in reviewing a plan presented to the county reorganization committee, the county reorganization committee shall take into consideration any advice or suggestions offered by the State Reorganization Committee. The county reorganization committee shall give due consideration to the following:

1. To the educational needs of local communities
2. To the economics in transportation and administration costs
3. To the future use of existing satisfactory school buildings, sites and play fields
4. To the convenience and welfare of pupils
5. To a reduction in the disparities in per-pupil valuation among school districts
6. To the equalization of the educational opportunity of pupils, and
7. To any other matters which, in its judgement, are of importance

Step #2: A plan for the reorganization of school districts involving territory lying in two or more counties shall be prepared or accepted by the joint action of a special committee composed of three members of the county committee of each county involved.

1. Meetings of the special committee shall be held on call of the members of the county having the largest number of pupils residing in the proposed district.
2. Notice of meetings to committees in other interested counties shall be by either certified or registered mail at least ten days in advance of each meeting.
3. Business shall be conducted by those present and shall be binding regardless of attendance.

Step #3: Before any plan on reorganization is completed by the county reorganization committee, it shall hold one or more public hearings.

1. Notice of hearings shall be given by the publication in a local newspaper of general circulation in the county at least ten days prior to each hearing. (See Suggested Notice of Public Hearing in Appendix B.)
2. The county reorganization committee shall keep a record of all hearings held in the formulation of the reorganization plan.

3. The county reorganization committee shall hear from any and all persons interested in the plan with respect to:
   a. The merits of the proposed reorganization plans
   b. The value and amount of all property of whatever nature involved in the proposed action
   c. The amount of outstanding indebtedness of each district and the proposed disposition thereof, and
   d. The equitable adjustment of all property debts, and liabilities among the districts involved

Step #4: After public hearing or hearings have been held, the county reorganization committee or special committee may prepare and approve a plan or plans (See "Suggested Form of Plan", Appendix B). Such plan shall contain:

1. A description of the proposed boundaries of the reorganized district
2. A summary of the reasons for each proposed change, realignment, or adjustment of the boundaries. (Note: Statute 79-426.11 states that in the event that the plan provides for the creation of a new Class VI district, the plan should designate whether the school shall include grades seven through twelve or grades nine through twelve. This section of the 79-426.11 has been superceded by 79-102.01 which states that all Class VI schools formed after June 1, 1971 *must* provide instruction for grades seven through twelve.)
3. A summary of the terms on which reorganization is to be made between reorganized districts. (Note: At this point 79-426.11 states that these terms shall include provisions for initial school board "districts or wards." Statute 79-426.19 states that the first board shall be appointed on "an at-large basis." It is recommended that boards be appointed on an at-large basis. The reasons for this will be discussed later.)
4. A statement of the findings with respect to the location of schools, the utilization of existing buildings, the construction of new buildings, and the transportation requirements under the proposed plan of reorganization. The plan may contain provisions for holding school within existing buildings in the newly reorganized district and that schools so constituted shall be maintained until the legal voters served by the school vote in favor of discontinuing the school
5. A map showing the boundaries of established school districts and the boundaries proposed under the plan of reorganization
6. Whenever two or more districts are involved in a reorganization plan, the old districts shall continue to be responsible for any indebtedness incurred before reorganization takes place, unless a different arrangement is included in the plan voted upon by the people
7. Such other matters as the county committee shall determine proper to be included

Step #5: The reorganization proposal prepared by any special committee shall be forwarded to the county committee of the county which has the largest number of pupils residing in the proposed joint district, for review, and approval or disapproval. The plan shall be forwarded to the State Committee for review when authorized by a majority vote of the members of the county reorganization committee.

1. The reorganization plan shall be certified as authorized by a majority vote of the county committee and signed by the chairperson and the secretary of the county reorganization committee. (For example see Appendix B.)
2. A copy of the official minutes showing the approval of the reorganization plan by the county committee should be forwarded to the State Reorganization Committee with the reorganization plan.
3. In addition to the reorganization plan, the State Reorganization Committee requests that the following information be included when a plan is submitted:
   a. A statement of joint committee action, if more than one county is involved
   b. A record of all hearings held in the formulation of the plan (For example see Appendix B.)

c. A study of probable enrollment by district and grade (For example see Appendix A.)
d. A study of the number of pre-school children and school-age children by district (For example see Appendix A.)
e. A study of nonresident school attendance areas (For example see Appendix A.)
f. A study of assessed valuation. (For example see Appendix A)
g. A study of the proposed educational program and the budget proposed to support the program.

4. The State Reorganization Committee shall, within thirty days from the receipt of the reorganization plan, consider same, and shall notify the county reorganization committee whether or not it has any changes to recommend to the plan. Such recommendations are advisory only.
5. When a plan, or any part thereof, has been approved by the county committee and the State Committee, it shall be designated as the final approved plan and shall be submitted to a vote of the people.

Step #6: When recommendations for changes are made by the State Reorganization Committee, the county reorganization committee shall consider such recommendations, and shall determine whether or not to accept the recommendations.

1. The county reorganization committee may hold one or more public hearings in connection with the determination of the acceptance of the recommendations of the State Reorganization Committee.
2. The county reorganization committee shall announce its decision within thirty days after it reviews the recommendations from the State Committee.
3. The reorganization plan, as finally adopted by the county reorganization committee, shall be submitted to a vote of the people.

Step #7: Not less than thirty nor more than sixty days after the reorganization plan is finally approved by the county reorganization committee the proposal shall be voted upon at a special election in the districts whose boundaries are changed by the reorganization plan, including the boundaries of Class VI schools if such plan includes Class I districts which are entirely within a Class VI school district.

1. Notice of the election shall be given by the county clerk or election commissioner and shall be published in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the county at least ten days prior to the election. (For example see Appendix B.)
2. Ballots shall be prepared and the special election shall be held and conducted by the county clerk or election commissioner and the expenses of such election is to be paid by the county board or boards. (For example of ballots see Appendix B.)
3. Where the proposed plan of reorganization involves a district under the jurisdiction of another county committee, the county clerk or election commissioner of the county which has the largest number of pupils residing in the proposed joint district shall give the notice required for the election in a newspaper of general circulation in the territory of the proposed district, and prepare the ballots, and such election shall be held and conducted by the county clerk or election commissioner of each county involved in the proposed reorganization plan. Each county board shall bear a share of the total election in the same proportion that the number of electors residing in the proposed districts in one county stands to the whole number of electors in the proposed district.
4. All districts of a like class shall vote as a unit. Class I school districts which have an incorporated village or city within their boundaries shall constitute a separate voting unit and Class I districts which do not have an incorporated village or city shall constitute a separate voting unit. Approval of the plan shall require a majority of all electors voting within each voting unit included in the proposed reorganization plan.

Step #8: If the plan for reorganization is adopted, the county superintendent of schools shall proceed to cause the changes, realignments and adjustment of districts to be carried out as outlined in the reorganization proposal.

1. Schools shall be reclassified
2. Certificates shall be filed with the county assessor, county clerk and county treasurer showing new school district boundaries. (For example of certificates see Appendix B.)

Step #9: Within thirty days after the classification by the county superintendent of schools of the reorganized districts, the county reorganization committee shall appoint the new board of education.

1. The first board of education shall be appointed at-large.
2. If the new district involves territory lying in two or more counties, the board of education shall be appointed by the joint action of the county reorganization committees involved.

At this point specific attention should be called to Nebraska Statutes 79-426.23 through 79-426.26. These statutes refer to proposals to dissolve Class I or Class II school districts except a Class I district which is part or wholly within a Class VI school district, and attach the district to one or more existing Class II, III, IV or V school districts. The statutes make provisions for such proposals to be initiated by a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent of the legal voters of the district. The petitions, together with an affidavit listing the names of all legal voters of the district should then be filed with the county superintendent of the county in which the greater part of the district is located. These statutes provide further information as to how the petition is to be transmitted to the county and State Reorganization Committees and eventually brought to a vote of the legal voters of the Class I or Class II district involved. This method of bringing about an election is one that is not frequently used and requires that the county reorganization committee submit the plan to the State Reorganization Committee. Should both the county and State Reorganization Committees disapprove the proposal, no further action can be taken for a period of six months.

Boards of education or reorganization committees should give careful consideration to the choosing of either the "petition method or the "election method" of reorganization. There are advantages and disadvantages of each. The "petition method," whereby a door-to-door attempt is made to get the signatures of sixty to sixty-five percent of the legal voters, can be an arduous process. This process is usually limited to small reorganization proposals. The use of board-to-board petitions is usually more acceptable in larger districts if there is an incorporated village or city located within the district. One of the problems in using board-to-board petitions is that it is possible for boards of education to misread the feelings of the patrons of the school district. Therefore, when the board-to-board petition method is used it becomes very important that a sufficient number of public hearings are held so that the patrons of the district become fully acquainted with the reorganization plan and the boards of education understand the feelings of the patrons of the school district toward the plan. In those Nebraska school districts which have successfully used the board-to-board petition, it has been reported that eighty to ninety percent of the people within the districts have supported the reorganization plan. These percentages have been ascertained after public hearings have been held and an *unofficial* vote taken. Where it is apparent that a high percentage of the patrons of a school district support a reorganization plan, the board-to-board petition becomes an acceptable procedure. Two major pitfalls of the board-to-board petitions are: (1) boards of education allow their personal desires to reorganize to dominate their decisions, and (2) boards fail to completely understand the thoughts of the patrons of the school district and think the majority of the patrons support a reorganization plan when in fact they do not.

The "election method" of school district reorganization has been used in larger reorganization proposals more frequently than the "petition method." People appear to prefer to have the opportunity to vote to merge with another school district rather than to have a board of education make this decision for them. On the surface it would appear that it might be easier to secure approval of a reorganization proposal by following the "election method" than it would by the "petition method." The "election method" requires a simple majority of the voters whereas the "petition method" requires sixty to sixty-five percent of the signatures of

the legal voters. However, as previously mentioned, each class of school district involved in the reorganization proposal constitutes a voting unit. Therefore, the proposal must pass in each voting unit. Failure of the proposal to pass in any one of the voting units will result in the failure of the total proposal. Consequently, in recent years people working on reorganization proposals have attempted to determine how much support a proposal might have. If communities appear to be highly supportive of a reorganization proposal, consideration may be given to proceeding with board-to-board petitions rather than by the "election method."

It was recommended earlier that new boards of education be appointed on an at-large basis even though the statutes make reference to appointing them either by wards or at-large. (See Nebraska Statutes 79-402.07, 79-426.11 and 79-426.19.) A factor which has apparently influenced the appointment of boards of education on an at-large basis is that the part of Nebraska Staute 79-426.19 which makes reference to appointing new boards of education on an at-large basis was added, by action of the Nebraska Legislature, after Nebraska Statute 79426.11 was put into effect. The question would then be, "Does the later amendment to 79426.19 supercede that part of 79-426.11 which refers to establishing school district wards?" Rather than to run the risk of having a reorganization proposal end up in the courts over this section of the statutes, it is recommended that the new board of education be appointed on an at-large basis. If it is desired to establish wards, it can be done at a later date as outlined in Nebraska Statute 5-108.

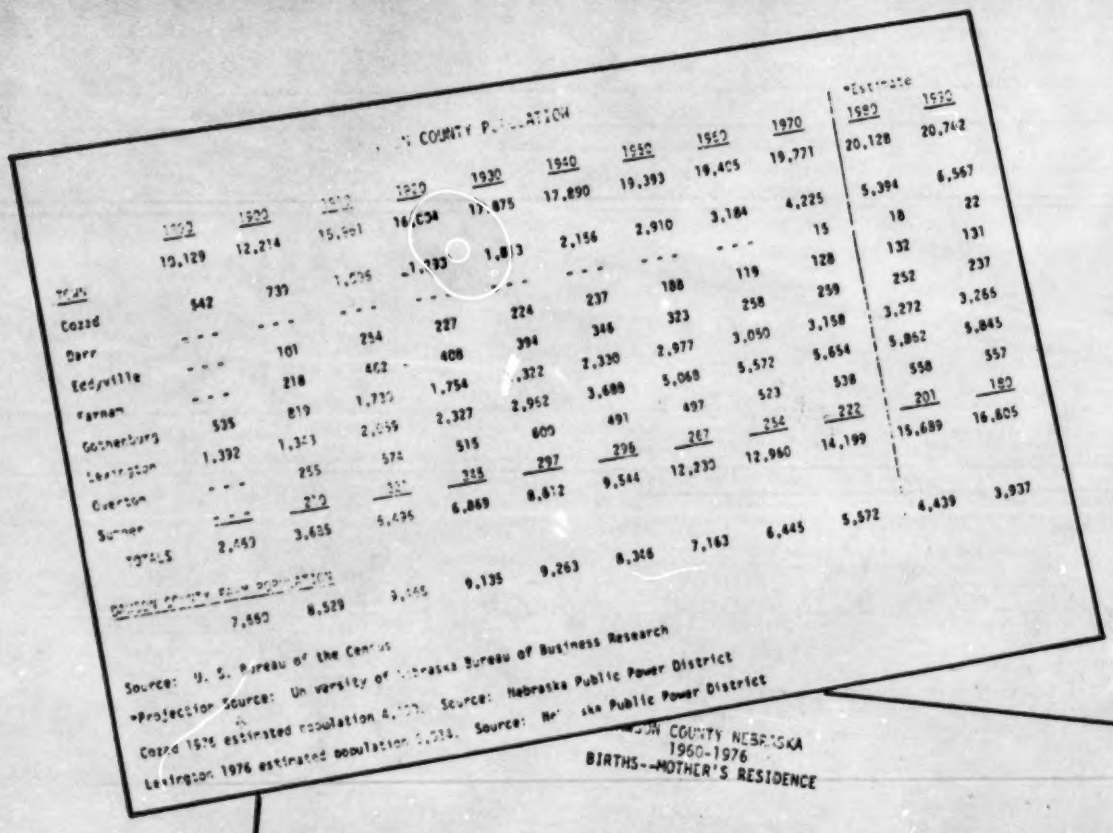
To this point no reference has been made to the involvement of resource personnel in a reorganization proposal, other than retaining legal and technical consultants. It would be advisable to consider bringing in lay people from school districts that have had successful reorganization programs. These individuals could provide first-hand information as to problems which might be avoided or successful procedures which might be followed. Frequently, people from small communities will be concerned about the future of their communities if their school is closed, or are concerned about their children attending a larger school. By hearing first-hand from individuals that have gone through school district reorganization, it may be possible to provide answers to these concerned individuals.

Finally, the length of time the reorganization proposal is kept before the public can be critical to the successful passage of the plan. Although it is essential that sufficient time be provided so that all patrons have the opportunity to become familiar with the proposal, care must be taken not to move too slowly. Allowing too much time to elapse between the time the Petition or Election Subcommittee starts its orientation process and the time the reorganization proposal is forwarded to the county and State Committees may result in the opposition organizing a counter campaign. This counter campaign may not only result in added difficulty in passing the reorganization proposal, but could result in the development of an antagonistic atmosphere which could provide obstructions for a smooth transition from old districts to the newly reorganized district.

The total length of time that it takes the boards of education and the steering committee to develop the plan as well as for the plan to be presented to the public will be determined by the scope of the proposal. It is recommended that one of the first tasks of either the boards of education or the technical advisor would be to develop a time line. This time line should indicate the approximate time specific activities will take place as well as how much time might be allocated for each activity.

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR COLLECTING STATISTICAL INFORMATION



... COUNTY POPULATION

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	*Estimate 1980	1990
	10,129	12,214	15,961	16,634	17,875	17,890	19,393	19,405	19,771	20,128	20,742
Cozad	542	739	1,036	1,193	1,813	2,156	2,910	3,184	4,225	5,394	6,567
Darr	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	15	18	22
Eddyville	---	101	254	227	224	237	188	119	128	132	131
Farnam	---	218	462	408	394	346	323	258	259	252	237
Gothenburg	535	819	1,739	1,754	1,322	2,330	2,977	3,050	3,158	3,272	3,265
Lexington	1,392	1,343	2,059	2,327	2,962	3,688	5,068	5,572	5,654	5,862	5,845
Overton	---	255	574	515	600	491	497	523	538	558	557
Sumner	---	219	321	335	297	296	267	254	222	201	180
TOTALS	2,463	3,635	6,436	6,869	8,612	9,544	12,230	12,960	14,199	15,689	16,805
Balance of County	7,666	8,579	9,525	9,765	9,263	8,346	7,163	6,445	5,572	4,439	3,937

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census

*Projection Source: University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research

Cozad 1976 estimated population 6,[illegible]. Source: Nebraska Public Power District

Lexington 1976 estimated population [illegible]. Source: Nebraska Public Power District

...SON COUNTY NEBRASKA
1960-1976
BIRTHS--MOTHER'S RESIDENCE

County	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Cozad	75	71	70	73	86	86	80	68	71	67	90	74	57	52	59	63	74
Gothenburg	60	70	60	58	68	52	63	64	42	59	53	60	66	66	65	65	53
Lexington	179	168	168	145	113	98	87	78	77	77	97	135	90	92	93	114	102
Balance of Co.	156	166	175	185	163	127	111	81	97	119	111	106	111	104	117	118	126
Total of Co	410	475	453	441	410	363	321	271	287	322	351	335	304	294	312	340	355
State Totals	34,257	34,544	33,886	32,624	30,727	27,829	25,618	24,259	24,236	24,901	25,877	25,507	23,473	22,771	23,695	23,658	[illegible]

Source: Nebraska Department of Health, Statistical Reports

TECUMSEH PUBLIC ...
SELECTED DATA
(1967-1976)

YEAR	ASSESSED VALUATION	MILL LEVY				BONDED INDEBTEDNESS	ENROLLMENT		TOTAL ENROLLMENT
		GEN'L	BOND	OTHER	TOTAL		ELEMENTARY K-6	SECONDARY 7-12	
1967-1968	6,562,300	67.60	6.83		91.23	$80,000	329	287	596
1968-1969	6,200,835	68.23	8.97		87.12	$70,000	336	307	643
1969-1970	5,719,964	61.22	7.68		69.97	$55,000	312	323	635
1970-1971	6,098,779	49.39	7.09		56.59	$35,000	304	333	637
1971-1972	6,382,934	54.29	9.13		63.32	$15,000	282	341	623
1972-1973	6,433,204	59.30	8.66	2.50	69.46	395,000	292	331	623
1973-1974	7,679,663	53.00	8.74	4.00	65.14	475,000	296	305	601
1974-1975	7,832,758	53.30	8.64	3.96	64.40	455,000	253	322	575
1975-1976	8,827,282	55.40	5.92	4.00	68.42	435,000	234	325	559
1976-1977	8,972,297	60.35	8.14	4.00	69.64	415,000	196	304	500

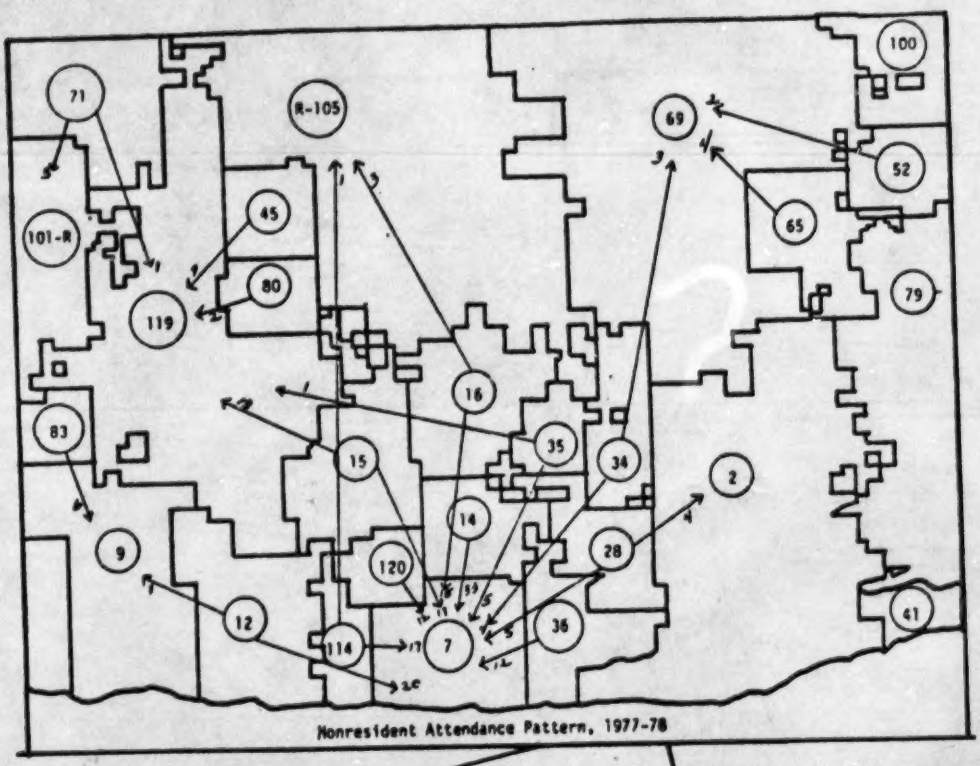
Malcolm Public Schools

PRE-SCHOOL CENSUS AND ENROLLMENT
1966-1976

YEAR	PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN 1-5 YRS YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	TOTAL PRE-SCHOOL	KDGT	ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT GR 1	GR 2	GR 3	GR 4	GR 5	GR 6	TOTAL ELEM ENROL	GR 7	GR 8	GR 9	GR 10	GR 11	GR 12	TOTAL HS ENROL	TOTAL ENRL K-12
66-67	5	8	12	14	11	50	19	14	16	15	9	13	10	96	9	19	22	24	11	13	98	194
67-68	6	7	9	12	14	48	11	19	13	14	12	11	12	92	10	8	16	19	24	12	89	181
68-69	1	7	8	8	8	32	12	11	19	16	13	13	11	95	24	10	20	19	19	23	115	210
69-70	8	2	7	9	9	35	9	13	12	20	15	15	13	97	18	22	14	17	17	19	107	204
70-71	2	13	4	10	7	36	12	11	15	15	25	16	18	112	19	19	24	18	15	16	111	223
71-72	10	5	19	7	16	57	13	11	13	18	16	27	16	114	25	20	25	26	20	18	134	248
72-73	10	9	8	17	5	49	16	16	11	15	18	21	32	129	21	33	24	31	27	18	154	283
73-74	9	16	18	18	23	84	8	19	14	19	15	20	23	118	39	26	35	29	27	21	117	295
74-75	15	13	19	15	18	80	21	9	18	15	21	17	23	124	33	38	26	32	25	27	181	305
75-76	8	25	15	19	18	85	24	25	13	19	16	19	22	138	36	38	39	24	32	22	191	329
76-77	9	17	24	15	23	88	20	27	27	15	20	16	22	147	32	38	37	40	26	27	200	347

FRIEND SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROJECTED ENROLLMENT
1978-1987

YEAR	KDGT.	ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT GR. 1	GR. 2	GR. 3	GR. 4	GR. 5	GR. 6	K-6 TOTAL	SECONDARY ENROLLMENT GR. 7	GR. 8	GR. 9	GR. 10	GR. 11	GR. 12	TOTAL H.S. ENROL.	TOTAL ENROL. K-12
1978-79	17	23	28	22	22	31	27	170	28	35	30	34	36	26	189	359
1979-80	16	17	24	28	22	22	32	161	28	29	35	30	34	36	192	353
1980-81	28	17	18	25	29	23	23	163	33	29	28	34	30	33	187	350
1981-82	25	29	18	18	24	29	23	166	24	33	28	28	34	29	176	352
1982-83	21	27	29	17	19	25	31	168	24	24	32	27	27	33	167	335
1983-84	20	22	27	29	18	18	26	160	32	24	23	32	27	26	164	324
1984-85	19	21	22	28	30	19	19	158	27	31	23	23	31	26	161	319
1985-86	19	21	21	23	28	30	19	161	19	26	30	23	22	30	150	311
1986-87	18	20	21	22	23	28	31	163	20	19	26	30	23	22	140	303
1987-88	17	19	20	20	22	23	27	148	32	19	18	26	29	22	146	294



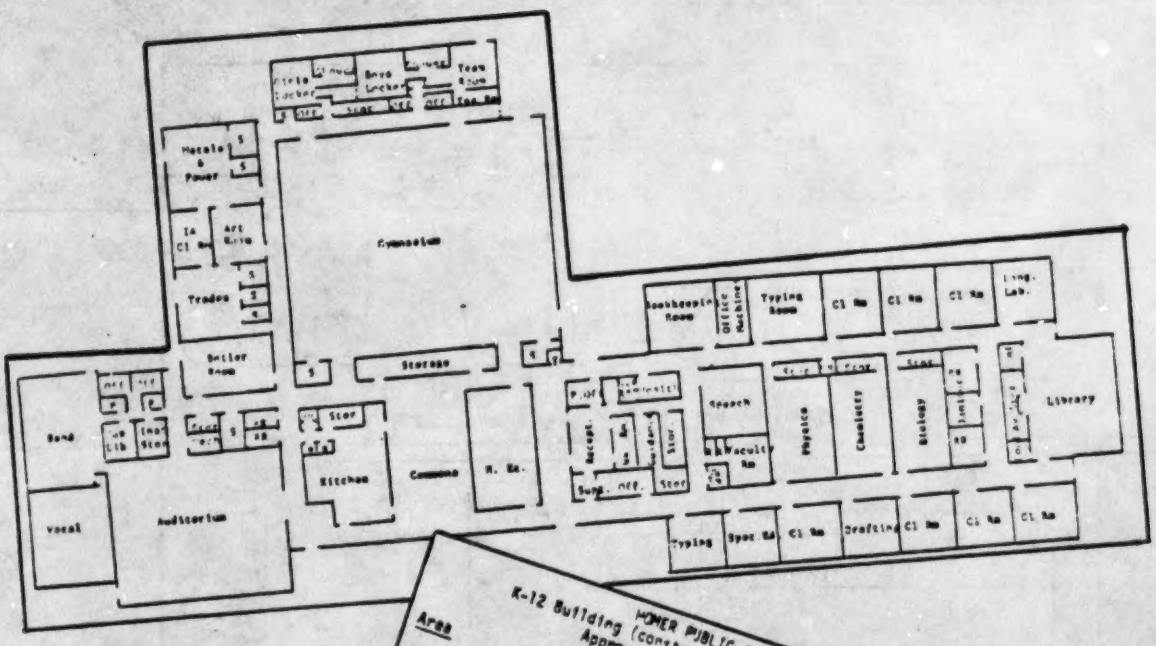
Nonresident Attendance Pattern, 1977-78

CLASS I DISTRICTS SERVED BY ALBION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SELECTED DATA, 1977-1978

DISTRICT	ASSESSED VALUATION	MILL LEVY GEN'L	MILL LEVY BOND	MILL LEVY OTHER	MILL LEVY TOTAL	ENROLLMENT ELEMENTARY K-8	ENROLLMENT SECONDARY 9-12
9	1,692,405	9.52		21.03	30.55	24	
13	1,699,275	7.28		21.03	28.31	15	
20	716,080	16.19		21.03	37.22	6	
39	652,770	9.28		21.03	30.31	8	
41	1,834,430	22.46		21.03	43.49	52	
49	2,050,855	9.36		21.03	30.39	22	
57	2,601,260	9.69		21.03	30.72	21	
60	1,263,695	9.25	1.19	21.03	31.47	10	
74	1,731,485	9.91		21.03	30.94	18	
Sub Total	14,242,255					176	303
Albion	10,077,135	78.75	4.63		83.38	328	303
Total	24,319,390					504	

NON-RESIDENT ATTENDANCE PATTERN
1977-78

District	# 1 Albion	# 6 Cedar Rapids	#36 Paterburg	#17 St. Edwards	Total
9	3	7		3	14
13	17				17
20			8		8
39	1				1
41	6				6
49	1	12			13
57	20		4		4
59	11				20
60					11
74	10				0
SW	15				10
BH			3		15
Total	85	3			3
		22	15	3	3
					125



HOMER PUBLIC SCHOOL
K-12 Building (constructed 1965, Addition 1968)
Approximate Space Available

Area	Square Feet
Administration:	
Superintendent's Office	195
Principal's Office	140
Guidance	190
Reception	370
Nurse	195
Vault	80
Subtotal	1,170
General Classrooms:	
6 Elementary classrooms @ 1025	6,150
1 Elementary classroom	960
1 Secondary classroom	1,025
2 Secondary classrooms @ 960	1,920
2 Secondary classrooms @ 800	1,600
Subtotal	11,655
Special Learning Areas:	
Kindergarten	1,215
Reading	1,025
Art	1,150
Music (including office, storage and practice rooms)	1,315
Library (including storage rooms)	1,680
Science (including science storage)	1,665
Business Education	1,230
Home Economics	1,620
Shop (including finish room and storage)	2,820
Stage (including stage storage)	1,610
Gymnasium	8,295
Dressing Rooms (2 at 1310, including PE storage and offices)	2,620
Subtotal	26,135
Other Areas:	
Faculty work room	230
Kitchen (including storage)	910
Dining	1,215
Mechanical	1,230
Custodial Shop	760
Stairs, halls, storage, toilets, layout, etc.	12,112
Subtotal	16,665
Approximate total space available	25,325
K-12 enrollment 1976-77 = 441	
Approximately 125 square feet per pupil	

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED PUBLIC NOTICES AND BALLOTS

Minutes of Public Hearing

_____, 19___

The _____County Committee for Reorganization of School Districts met at the school house in _____, Nebraska on _____, 19___, at _____ o'clock P.M. Those members present were: . . . . . Mr. _____Chairman, presided: and Miss _____Secretary recorded the proceeding.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The chairman announced that the meeting was now open for public hearing on the proposed plan.

Notice of Public Hearing was read by the Secretary.

The Chairman announced that all persons wishing to be heard or to present evidence upon the proposed reorganization plan would now be heard by the Committee.

The following persons made statements to the Committee, their remarks being summarized as follows:

Mr. _____, District #____, _____County: Favors Redistricting, wants his boy and girl to attend school in _____ rather than any other town.

Mrs. _____, District #____, _____County: Redistricting is the trend, which she observed in a trip through the western states this past year. Although roads have held up redistricting he believes that redistricting will improve roads.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried the meeting adjourned at ____P.M.

_____Chairman

_____Secretary

SUGGESTED NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice of Special Election

Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of School District Nos. ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, and ____, of _____County, Nebraska, that a special election has been called, in the manner provided by Law, for the purpose of affording the electors an opportunity to approve or reject the plan of reorganization of all of said school districts into one school district to be designated as School District No. ____, of _____County, Nebraska.

Said special election, will be held in the _____ in the City of _____, at the hour of ____o'clock A.M. and continues open until the hour of ____o'clock P.M.

That in said election, School Districts Nos. ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, and ____, of _____County, Nebraska, shall vote as one unit of Class I school districts, and School District No. ____ of _____ County, Nebraska, shall vote as one unit of Class III school districts.

That the official ballot for said election will be in words and figures following:

Proposition

Shall there be adopted the plan for the reorganization of School Districts No. ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, and ____, of _____County, Nebraska, into one school district to be designated as School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska, which plan provides that:

School District No. ____, of _____County, Nebraska, shall include all of the present school districts involved, which area includes, Section ____ to ____, inclusive; the East Half of Section _____, in Township ____, Range ____ west to the ____PM, _____ County, Nebraska . . . . . .

The Boundaries of School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska, shall be as follows: Commencing at the Southeast corner of _____, thence . . . . . to point o. beginning.

The plan for reorganization of school districts shall become effective for administrative purposes on _____, 19___.

School District No. ____, of _____County, Nebraska, shall receive all property and assume all debts and liabilities of each of the school district involved on _____, 19___.

Said Proposition shall be submitted by ballots on which shall be printed said proposition, and beneath it the form for voting, as follows:

☐ FOR the adoption of the plan of school district reorganization above set forth.

☐ AGAINST the adoption of the plan of school district reorganization above set forth.

and the voter shall place a cross in the square to the left of the answer he wishes to give.

Done by order of the _____ County Committee for Reorganization of School Districts, this ____ Day _____, 19___.

_____
Superintendent, Secretary _____County

SUGGESTED CERTIFICATE OF CHANGE IN BOUNDARIES

Certificate to the County (Assessor, Clerk & Treasurer) of Change of School District Boundaries

Office of County Superintendent of Schools

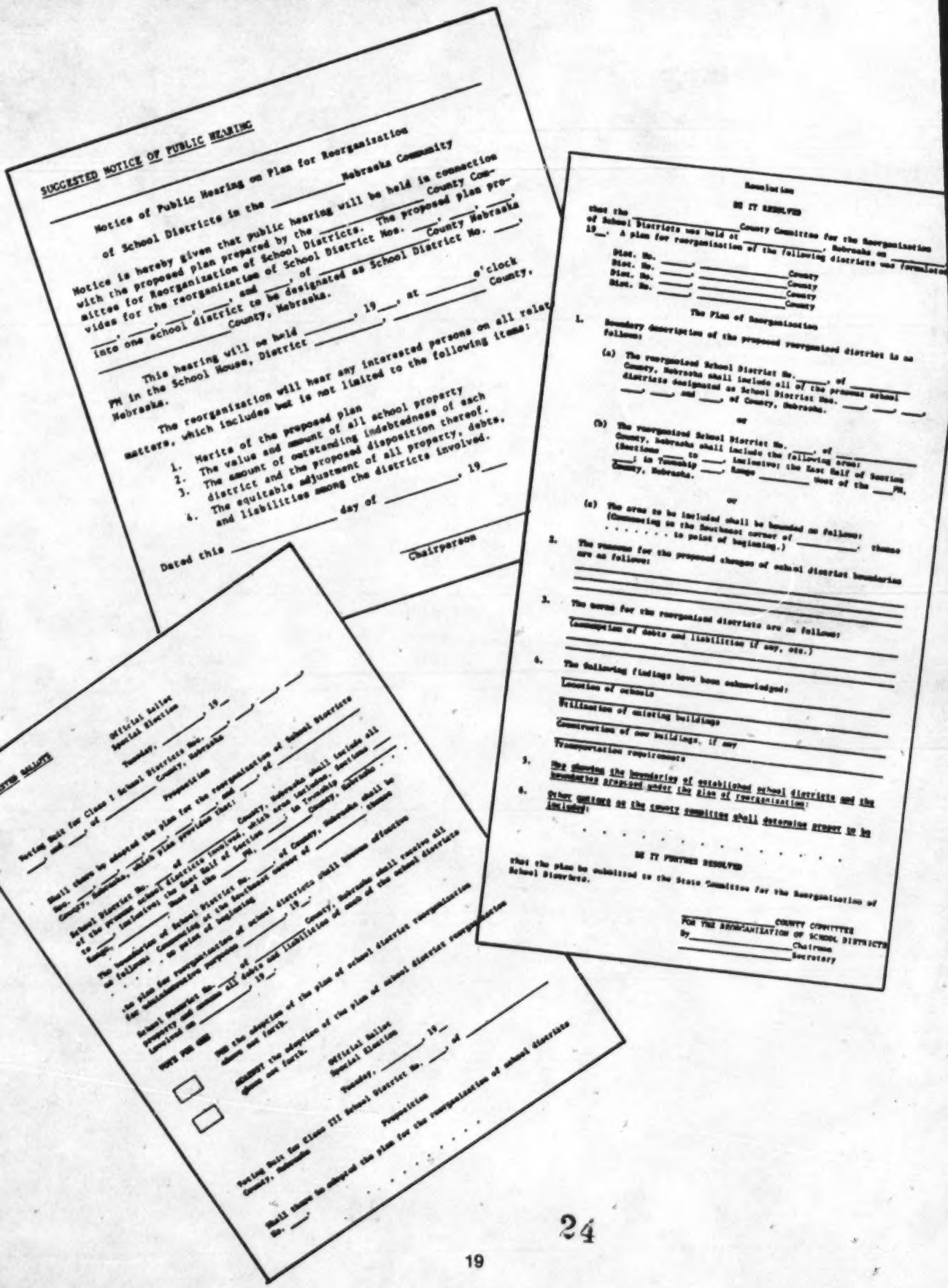
To the County (Assessor, Clerk, & Treasurer) of _____County, Nebraska:

I, hereby certify that the following changes in the boundary lines of _____County have been made by me, and the map of the school districts of _____County has been changed to correspond therewith to wit:

(Insert the same legal description as on proposition)

Done at the office of the County Superintendents on the ___day of _____, 19___.

_____
County Superintendents of Schools



SUGGESTED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice of Public Hearing on Plan for Reorganization of School Districts in the _____ Nebraska Community

Notice is hereby given that public hearing will be held in connection with the proposed plan prepared by the _____ County Committee for the reorganization of School Districts. The proposed plan provides for the reorganization of School District Nos. ___, ___, ___, ___, ___, ___, and ___, of _____ County, Nebraska into one school district to be designated as School District No. ___, _____ County, Nebraska.

This hearing will be held _____, 19__, at _____ o'clock PM in the School House, District _____, _____ County, Nebraska.

The reorganization will hear any interested persons on all relative matters, which includes but is not limited to the following items:

1. Merits of the proposed plan
2. The value and amount of all school property
3. The amount of outstanding indebtedness of each district and the proposed disposition thereof.
4. The equitable adjustment of all property, debts, and liabilities among the districts involved.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 19___

_____ Chairperson

Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED

that the _____ County Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts was held at _____, Nebraska on _____ 19__. A plan for reorganization of the following districts was formulated:

Dist. No. _____, _____ County
Dist. No. _____, _____ County
Dist. No. _____, _____ County
Dist. No. _____, _____ County

The Plan of Reorganization

1. Boundary description of the proposed reorganized district is as follows:

(a) The reorganized School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska shall include all of the presents school districts designated as School District Nos. ___, ___, ___, ___, ___, and ___, of County, Nebraska.

or

(b) The reorganized School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska shall include the following area: (Sections ____ to ____, inclusive; the East Half of Section ____; in Township ____, inclusive; the East Half of Section ____, in Township ___, Range _____ West of the ___PM, County, Nebraska.

or

(a) The area to be included shall be bounded as follows: (Commencing on the Southeast corner of _____, thence . . . . . to point of beginning.)

2. The reasons for the proposed changes of school district boundaries are as follows:

3. The terms for the reorganized districts are as follows: (Assumption of debts and liabilities if any, etc.)

4. The following findings have been acknowledged:
   Location of schools
   Utilization of existing buildings
   Construction of new buildings, if any
   Transportation requirements

5. Map showing the boundaries of established school districts and the boundaries proposed under the plan of reorganization:

6. Other matters as the county committee shall determine proper to be included:

. . . . . .

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

that the plan be submitted to the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts.

_____ COUNTY COMMITTEE FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
By _____ Chairman
_____ Secretary

SUGGESTED BALLOTS

Official Ballot
Special Election
Tuesday, _____, 19__
Voting Unit for Class I School Districts Nos. ___, ___, ___, ___, ___, and ___, of _____ County, Nebraska

Proposition

Shall there be adopted the plan for the reorganization of School Districts Nos. ___, ___, ___, and ___, of _____ County, Nebraska, which plan provides that:

School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska shall include all of the present school districts involved, which are included: Sections ____ to ____, inclusive; the East Half of Section ____; in Township ____, Range _____ West of the ___PM, _____ County, Nebraska.

The boundaries of School District No. ____, of _____ County, Nebraska shall be as follows: Commencing at the Southeast corner of _____, thence . . . . . to point of beginning.

The plan for reorganization of school districts shall become effective for administrative purposes _____, 19__, _____ County, Nebraska shall be School District No. ____ of _____ County, Nebraska shall receive all property and assume all debts and liabilities of each of the school districts involved on _____, 19__.

VOTE FOR ONE

☐ FOR the adoption of the plan of school district reorganization above set forth.

☐ AGAINST the adoption of the plan of school district reorganization above set forth.

Official Ballot
Special Election
Tuesday, _____, 19__
Voting Unit for Class III School District No. ___, of _____ County, Nebraska

Proposition

Shall there be adopted the plan for the reorganization of school districts No. ___?

. . . . . .

24